

Appln. No.: 09/373,230  
Amdt. dated: May 19, 2008  
Reply to Office Action of February 21, 2008

### **Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

### **Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled).

18 (Currently amended). An isolated variant of interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which IFN- $\gamma$  production inducing protein has an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr, wherein said variant thereof has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 except that (i) one or more amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 are replaced with other amino acids, and/or (ii) ~~one or more amino acids are~~ acid is added to the ~~N- and C-termini in amino acid sequence of~~ SEQ ID NO:2, ~~and/or (iii) one or more amino acids in the N- and C-termini in SEQ ID NO:2 are deleted,~~ while retaining IFN- $\gamma$  production inducing ability, said variant inducing IFN- $\gamma$  production when administered to mouse and rat, exhibiting a single protein band when electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), and having a molecular weight of 19,000 $\pm$ 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and SDS-PAGE.

19 (Previously presented). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the variant of claim 18.

Claims 20-23 (Cancelled).

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24(New). An isolated interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, excluding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, which can be administered to mammals selected from the group consisting of mouse, rat, hamster, rabbit, dog, and cat to induce IFN- $\gamma$  production; and which binds to a monoclonal antibody specifically binding to the polypeptide.

25(New). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the isolated interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein of claim 24.

26(New). An isolated variant of interferon-gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which IFN- $\gamma$  production inducing protein has an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr, wherein said variant thereof has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 except that (i) one or two amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 are replaced with other amino acids, and/or (ii) one amino acid is added to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, while retaining IFN- $\gamma$  production inducing ability, said variant inducing IFN- $\gamma$  production when administered to mouse and rat, exhibiting a single protein band when electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), and having a molecular weight of 19,000 $\pm$ 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and SDS-PAGE.

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27(New). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the variant of claim 26.